

# See **FIRST**, Understand **FIRST**, Act **FIRST**

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## **IED Conference looks for solutions to save lives**

*By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA  
American Forces Press Service*



**Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré, commander of First U.S. Army, speaks to the media during a news conference at Camp Shelby. The command sponsored a two-day conference to enhance how Soldiers train to react, interdict and defeat improvised explosive devices on the battlefield. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA**

Powerful improvised explosive devices (IEDs) set off by cell phones, doorbells, toy remotes and tripwires are the leading cause of death among U.S. Soldiers in Iraq.

For that reason, Army Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré, commander of First U.S. Army, summoned observers and trainers from his command to Camp Shelby for a two-day conference to discuss ways to better train soldiers to react, interdict and defeat IEDs on the battlefield.

Honoré -- whose command stretches throughout 27 states east of the Mississippi River, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands -- has made IED training a priority for Reserve and Guard Soldiers mobilizing for war.

More than 41,000 Reserve and Guard Soldiers have received some level of IED training at Camp Shelby before deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"There is no more important business in First Army and to our Army today than to continue to develop, continue to train and continue

to evolve techniques to help us fight IEDs," Honoré told a group of trainers during an opening briefing.

"As the enemy adapts, we need to be able to adapt. The fact that he is using IEDs is no precursor for us to quit," the general said. "We will win this fight. And for us to win, we have to be adaptable, we have to be flexible, and we have to out-think the enemy." That is the challenge the general put forth, as trainers try to come up with new ways to train and outsmart what leaders say is an "adaptive enemy."

"The enemy is constantly adapting ways of using IEDs to attack formations," the general reminded the trainers. "We've seen up to 13 ways he has created just to arm an IED -- everything from using a car remote to a

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## Commander's Corner

### Lt. Gen. Honoré leads the charge

He's known for his searing one-liners; a relentless schedule that allows only two hours of sleep a night; and a growly, commanding presence. He's also in charge of the military's response to hurricane Katrina. If that superstorm now rivals the 9/11 terror attacks on the scale of national disasters, then First Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré has emerged as the Rudy Giuliani of the Gulf Coast.

A rough-talking Louisiana native, he is credited with changing the character of the relief effort from a mad scramble to an increasingly orderly and effective rescue and restoration mission. But General Honoré is also having to navigate a fine line between necessary leadership and the specter of federal troops using force against American citizens. So far, he appears to have succeeded.

"This is a particularly urgent situation and it looks like the military is the only thing that's functioned in this entire mess," says Michael Greve, an expert at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank. "Once they arrived, things turned around."

In fact, a SurveyUSA poll of 1,200 Americans this week voted General Honoré as the most effective leader of the relief operation, ahead of Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin and, at the bottom of the list, Michael Brown, former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Running on a couple of hours' sleep a night, Honoré brings an unbridled passion to his job, challenging subordinates to keep up, his aides say. "The name fits: If he's not Honoré, he's ornery," says one volunteer.

"He's less a man than a force of nature," says his battle captain, Maj. John Rogers. "He knows the way and that's why he's leading. If you wonder whether God has a role in this relief effort, General Honoré is proof: He's the right man for the job."

The general himself talks of Katrina - which caused potentially thousands of fatalities, displaced an estimated 1 million people, and wrecked at least 140,000 homes - as an enemy. "It was a classic military attack," he says here at Camp Shelby, the US Northern Command forward headquarters in the Katrina effort. "He destroyed communications and moved barges across roads. He created shock and paralysis."



**Coast Guard Vice Adm Thad Allen (left), President Bush (center) and Lt. Gen. Russell Honore (right) in Baton Rouge for a meeting with FEMA officials. (Photo courtesy of AP).**

Currently, the Department of Homeland Security, through FEMA, is running the operation, and the Army gets its orders from DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. But it's the Humvees, five-ton trucks, and the spirit of the leader that are changing attitudes on the ground, and are largely responsible for bringing a sliver of hope to the shell-shocked victims of Katrina - and bolstering weary relief workers.

Willing to get into even the dirtiest task, the general has, by force of personality, changed the pace of the operation as he zips by helicopter from New Orleans to Biloxi, from Gulfport to the canteen of the USS Iwo Jima tied up to the New Orleans docks. His energy is infectious. "There's hope in his message," says Lt. Col. John Cornelio.

**Courtesy of Christian Science Monitor) This story was written by Patrik Jonsson.**



**Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré  
Commander,  
First U.S. Army  
(Photo courtesy of AP).**

At time of printing, Lt. Gen. Honoré was serving as Commander, Joint Task Force-Katrina.

## Command Sergeant Major Speaks



**Marvin L. Hill**  
Command Sergeant Major  
First U.S. Army

### The importance of communications

When friends come over to socialize we often play board games. One of the first things we do is break out the rule book. This allows all players to have a fair and equal chance at winning. It lays out the rules and expectations for others to follow those rules. Counseling is no different. Counseling gives leaders an opportunity to explain the rules of the game so that no one is confused about expectations.

It also allows Soldiers to express their goals to their leaders and understand that they have a role in the fulfillment of their goals.

Another means of communication is through the noncommissioned officer after action reviews. During this process the senior NCOs of the unit explain to the Training Support Brigade (TSB) cadre their concerns as they relates to training, personnel, equipment, and life support at the mobilization stations. I encourage TSBs to communicate with NCOs weekly. This should be non-threatening to ensure our training remains self-correcting.

Commanders must keep Soldiers informed. Not only is communication down the chain of command important, Soldiers need to keep each other and their superiors informed. In other words, to be effective, communication channels need to be open down, up, and throughout the unit.

- Communicate clear expectations.
- Take time to listen and understand.
- Show respect when communicating.
- Expect everyone to play by the same rules.
- Treat subordinates with dignity and respect.

An open forum of communications is not just a nice thing to do. It is our obligation as leaders.

"The art of communication is the language of leadership."  
James Humes

*See First, Understand First, Act First*



## Army inactivates oldest air defense battalion

*By Spc. Joe Alger*

The 1st Infantry Division held an inactivation ceremony Sept. 15 at Leighton Barracks for the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, the oldest air defense battalion in the active Army.

During the ceremony, the colors of 4-3 ADA were sheathed to signify the inactivation, while the colors of the Air and Missile Defense Detachment were presented to the command.

The Air and Missile Defense Detachment was created to serve as the 1st ID commanding general's advisor on all matters related to air and missile defense to provide early warning and to perform airspace management functions for the division.

The detachment will serve as an interim organization until the 1st ID transforms into a Unit of Employment.

With the name change and restructure, command of the detachment also changed from Maj. Clark R. Denman to Maj. John E. Labadini.

"This is a day to reflect on the long and illustrious lineage of 4-3 ADA," said Brig. Gen. James Barclay, 1st ID assistant division commander for maneuver. "It's also a day to look forward as we enter this time of transition."

The unit's history began in 1794 as the 3rd Company, 4th Battalion Corps of Artillerists and Engineers. The battalion's Soldiers have seen action in almost every major conflict in U.S. history, most recently in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The Soldiers of 4-3 ADA have done their nation proud up until the very last day," Barclay said.

(Editor's note: Spc. Joe Alger serves with 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Office)

## IED Conference spotlights 'mine dog'

By *Phil Manson*

One of the more promising developments discussed at the Warfighter IED Conference, Aug. 16-17, was the use of mine dogs to defeat improvised explosive devices.

Jim Pettite, mine dog program manager for the 67th Engineer Detachment, explained how the program works to about 100 conference attendees at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

"The mine dog program involves four months of rigorous training by both the Soldier and the dog," Pettite said. "We use 'family friendly' dog breeds – black labs and golden retrievers – because they are less threatening to civilians than German Shepherds and Doberman Pinschers.

"The dogs work what is known as 'off leash,' which means they are actually on a leash, but it is several yards long so the dog is safely out in front of its handler."

The dogs are trained to detect many different types of explosives and ammunition, and Pettite said, to the dogs, it's all a big game.

"From the very beginning, the dogs are trained to believe that finding IEDs is a big game," said Staff Sgt. Harry Francorabassa, a mine-dog handler with the 67th Engineer Detachment.

"We can train three dogs simultaneously in a 50 by 50 meter area, and when they detect an IED successfully, they get to play with their special toy that is introduced to them at the beginning of training," Francorabassa explained. "Find the bomb, play with your toy! It's all a big game for the dogs."

However, in theater it's deadly serious business for the dogs and their Soldiers.

"It's a very hot environment for the dogs," Pettite said. "During a typical workday, the dogs are given frequent breaks, rest and sleep in air-conditioned kennels and eat a special diet. Also, the dog teams rotate out of theater every eight months to keep them fresh mentally and physically. They return here to Fort Leonard Wood and we repeat the training for their next deployment.

By the end of August, there were dozens of fully trained dog teams. And as a testament to their effectiveness, not a single dog or handler had become a casualty.



TMA the mine dog, who is accorded the rank of staff sergeant, shows her explosive-detecting abilities during the Warfighter IED Conference.  
(Photo by Phil Manson)

Many of the insurgents, though, have placed bounties on the dogs and their handlers.

In the conference's closing remarks, First Army Commander Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré stressed how much of a difference junior leaders can make in defeating the IED threat.

"Never before have the actions of our junior leaders on the battlefield had such a dramatic effect on the strategic outcome of the battle," Honoré said.

"Everyone is a sensor in the IED fight to detect, deter, defeat, prevent and respond to the threat!" Honoré said.

(Editor's note: Phil Manson serves with First U.S. Army Public Affairs.)



## 'Extreme makeover' rebuilds home of Army family

By *Kristen Marquez*

The home "makeover" of a Soldier injured in Iraq will kick off the season premiere of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" Sept. 25.

In late June, the family of Master Sgt. Luis Rodriguez got a surprise visit from the cast and crew, including the popular Ty Pennington, and a new 3,225-square-foot home near Fort Campbell, Ky., specifically tailored to the Rodriguez family's needs.

Rodriguez was injured in Iraq in 2003, losing his right leg above the knee, two fingertips on his left hand and he sustained serious shrapnel wounds when his Humvee was struck by a roadside bomb near Mosul, Iraq. Over a period of four months, he underwent 16 surgeries and had to learn how to walk with a prosthetic leg and crutches.





## Aviation Transformation includes new aircraft, upgrades

By Carrie David

Many changes are in store for Army aviation, beginning with a contract for 368 new Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters.

"ARH is the next significant step in modernizing and transforming Army Aviation," said Col. Mark Hayes, TRADOC system manager for reconnaissance and attack, located at Fort Rucker, Ala.

The \$2.2 billion contract with Bell Helicopter Textron Inc. -- awarded July 29 with a signing ceremony Aug. 29 -- calls for delivery of 38 of the new aircraft by fiscal year 2008, with the remainder delivered by fiscal year 2013.

"The ARH will have a larger, enhanced engine," said Col. Greg Gass, deputy director of the Army Aviation Task Force in the Pentagon.

In addition, an upgraded tail rotor from the Bell 427 provides greater directional stability and control authority and the upgraded glass cockpit provides greater accuracy, has better display ergonomics, and is more user friendly than the current display, said Gass, comparing it to the current OH-58 Kiowa helicopter.

The ARH will also incorporate an exhaust infrared suppressor. "This device suppresses heat from the helicopter so that it is less detectable by the enemy," Gass said.

"The ARH will replace the current Kiowa Warrior, one for one," said Lt. Col. Neil Thurgood, program manager for ARH, located at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

"The normal flying hours for the Kiowa is 14 a month, but it is flying about 70 hours a month per aircraft," said Gass. "That is a lot of strain on an aircraft. The ARH can sustain the current flying requirements."

The ARH is one of many initiatives resulting from the cancellation of the Comanche project in 2004, Gass said, which took the Army into a new phase of Army Aviation Transformation.

"We wanted to optimize our fleet for the joint fight and reduce logistics," said Gass. "We are restructuring

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## IEDs (Con't.)

a cell phone, to simple tripwire." The enemy, he said, is hiding bombs inside garbage and litter, and burying them beneath the streets.

"If you see a dead dog, or if you see a dead sheep in front of a shop that you know shouldn't be there, then you know something is wrong," he said, emphasizing that the U.S. military needs to do its best to stay ahead of enemy tactics.

Trainers sat in on a video teleconference with 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers currently in Iraq to learn about the latest on IED threats in the field.

Members of the Pentagon's Joint IED Defeat Task Force shared lessons learned from collaborative efforts to detect IEDs gathered from around the services. The task force, established in October 2003 and headed by Army Brig. Gen. Joseph Votel, works to develop countermeasures against IED attacks.

Early actions included increased body armor and up-armored and armored vehicles. But as Honoré pointed out, "Getting more armor isn't always the solution. The enemy just gets bigger bombs."

Army Col. Edward Martin, deputy director of the IED task force, said the military is changing some of its tactics by targeting the bomb makers and "making it more painful for the enemy."

"If the pain is greater than the gain, the outcome is obvious," he said.

Being proactive, rather than reactive, is a key part of First Army's IED training, said Army Lt. Col. Selso Tello, chief of training. "We are trying to engage the enemy where he is placing his IEDs, and going out and hunting IED makers," he said. But the enemy in Iraq may be changing tactics as well.

Honoré said that just as the Army uses pattern analysis to study how IED attacks are planned and implemented, the enemy too is conducting its own surveillance, studying time of day and routes of convoys, and the reaction of response units when events happen. Simply put, "As you watch the bear, the bear watches you," he said.

"As enemies change their tactics, techniques and procedures, we must change ours," said Army Lt. Col. Alan Hartfield, training officer for the task force.

*See IED's, p.6*

## First Soldiers receive Combat Action Badge

*By Cheryl Boujnida, Army News Service*



**Sgt. Sean Steans is awarded the Combat Action Badge by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker. Sgt. April Pashley stands at attention moments after receiving her award. Staff Sgt.**

At a Pentagon ceremony, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker awarded the Army's new Combat Action Badge for the first time to five Soldiers who engaged in combat with the enemy.

The CAB, approved by

Schoomaker in May, was created by the Army's leadership to recognize all Soldiers in combat. Soldiers engaged in the War on Terrorism since Sept. 18, 2001, are retroactively eligible to receive the award.

"These Soldiers, who represent our total Army, know what being a Soldier and a warrior stands for," Schoomaker said. "The Soldiers standing here have earned the right to be American – they have walked the walk, they stand for nobility and they represent the Warrior Ethos."

Schoomaker and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston presented Combat Action Badges to:

- Sgt. Michael Buyas, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division
- Sgt. Manuel J. Montano, 21st Military Police Company
- Sgt. Sean Steans, 377th Transportation Company, 3rd COSCOM
- Army Reserve Sgt. April Pashley, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion
- Army National Guard Sgt. Timothy Gustafson, 1st Battalion, 278th Regimental Combat Team

"These Soldiers are a reflection of the Army team fighting the Global War on Terrorism," Preston said. "Sit down and talk with any one of them and you'll find they are Americans who chose to be a part of something bigger than themselves and serve our nation at large."

## IED's (Con't)

One way the task force is doing so is by teaching trainers a "holistic approach" to stopping IED attacks that focuses on intelligence and information operations, as well as mitigation, prediction, detection, prevention and neutralization, Hartfield said.

"It's good, solid, basic skills, with all Soldiers being a sensor and aware of what to be looking for so they can feed actionable intelligence to go get the bomb makers and that source of supply," he explained.

Though the conference also looked at emerging technologies as a way to defeat IEDs -- discussed behind closed doors for security reasons -- Hartfield and other leaders said new technology is no "silver bullet." He said the military currently has sensors and jamming devices, and is rapidly fielding other technologies.

But Tello said that just as armor isn't a 100-percent solution, neither is new technology. "Even though we have the latest technology, they are all just tools of combat," he said. "And that's the way we look at them. There is no technology today that will provide an 'absolute solution' to the problem that we have right now. It's always going to take the Soldiers to be able to engage and take out and hunt down whatever it is that is facing us."

Possibly the best idea to combat the IED threat to come out of this conference requires little technology at all. Honoré told trainers he wants to incorporate a chapter on IEDs into the Common Tasks Training manuals used by every Soldier in basic training.

"The biggest killer on the battlefield, and there is no task in the CTT book for the Soldier," he said. "We've got to fix that."



## Oldest Buffalo Soldier dies at 111

Retired 1st Sgt. Mark Matthews, 111, one of the last of the nation's legendary Buffalo Soldiers, died of pneumonia Sept. 6 at Fox Chase Nursing Home in Washington.

Sgt. Matthews, who also was the oldest Buffalo Soldier, was heir to a proud military heritage that originated with the black Soldiers who fought in the Indian wars on the Western frontier.

## Army changes PLDC to Warrior Leader Course

The Army has announced that its Primary Leadership Development Course will be renamed the Warrior Leader Course, beginning Oct. 15, and officials said the new name reflects changes made to PLDC curriculum over the past year.

The course has been redesigned to better prepare Soldiers for asymmetrical warfare and now includes lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, said Brig. Gen. James M. Milano, the Army's director of Training under G3.

"The new WLC will not only prepare Soldiers for traditional challenges, but irregular challenges as well," Milano said after reviewing all the changes made to the curriculum this past year.

WLC now emphasizes the skills and knowledge small-unit leaders need to excel in a contemporary operational environment, Milano said.

"We are a nation at war. We have taken the lessons learned from our deployments and incorporated them into our revised leadership course," said Col. David Abramowitz, commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, which played a major role in redesigning the PLDC curriculum.

"These changes add rigor and relevance to the course and improve leadership skills and confidence in our junior leaders," Abramowitz said. "The course is revolutionary and warrants a name change."

Warrior Leader Course is the right name for the new course, Abramowitz said, because it "espouses the tenets of the Warrior Ethos."

PLDC used an instructor-centered, exposure, and feedback system. Instruction consisted of lecture, classroom-based practical exercises, and a cognitive skills test. A short Field Training Exercise was the practical exercise used to evaluate combat leader skills.

The FTX, though, lacked standardization throughout the Army, said retired Sgt. Maj. Ron Schexnayder of the G3 Leader Development Division. He said a different approach was needed to produce a competent, innovative, adaptive and agile combat leader required by the current operational environment.

The Warrior Leader Course is designed to provide the Army with NCOs who can visualize, describe, and execute squad-level operations in varied operational environments, Schexnayder said.

"The WLC places the responsibility of training individual Soldier skills back on the junior leader," said Command Sgt. Maj. James E. Dale of the Sergeants Major Academy. "This course prepares him/her to assume that role."

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## Recruiting Command to get new leader

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker announced a new job Aug. 16 for U.S. Army Recruiting Command commanding general Maj. Gen. Michael D. Rochelle.

Rochelle will become director of the Installation Management Agency, replacing Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Johnson, who will become deputy chief of engineers/deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Schoomaker announced Rochelle's replacement as Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, previously commander of the Gulf Region Division in Iraq, serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## New manual sets recovery doctrine

By Tisha Johnson

The phrase “I will never leave a fallen comrade,” is part of the Warrior Ethos listed in the Soldier’s Creed. Now publication of Army Field Manual 3-50.1, Army Personnel Recovery, makes the phrase more than just philosophy—it’s now doctrine.

Before August the Army didn’t have a set doctrine governing personnel recovery, said Lt. Col. John Horton, doctrine author at Fort Leavenworth’s Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate. “It was a combination of a couple of Army regulations that dealt primarily with SERE (survival, evasion, resistance and escape) and joint publications that talked about CSAR (combat search and rescue),” Horton said.

The new manual outlines personnel recovery as the effort to recover personnel who are “isolated, missing, detained or captured in an operation environment.” Recovery operations can include not only military personnel but also DoD civilians and contractors. Multinational partners, American civilians and the citizens of other nations may be included in personnel recovery efforts when directed by the Secretary of Defense.

The major doctrinal change is “Every Soldier and every sensor on the battlefield is woven into a seamless system as a part of our everyday operations and enables the immediate recovery of any personnel who are isolated, missing, detained or captured.”

The inclusion of every Soldier in personnel recovery is not a re-wording of established publications and policies—it is a significant change, Horton said.

In the past, personnel recovery was relegated to a dedicated force. “Someone would have to say, ‘Hey, we have somebody that is still out there. Go get them,’ and that dedicated force would go do it,” Horton said.

“Our Soldiers need to know that we’re not going to leave them out there, that we are coming for them,” Horton said.

## Transformation (Con’t.)

our maintenance and sustainability so that it won’t be so burdensome – more flexible, more deployable, more agile and more modular.”

“The decision to restructure Army Aviation through the termination of Comanche really permitted us to take some of the investment – known and tested technologies – and integrate them quicker into old and new systems,” Gass said.

“Reinvesting the gains we made with the Comanche project helped reduce the process of acquisition and saved time,” said Gass. “We are at war, and we wanted to make it happen quicker.”

“The Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, Ala. – recently designated the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Center of Excellence – brings war fighting capabilities to the field by developing new concepts, programs and training for aviation Soldiers worldwide,” Hayes said.

New concepts and programs are already developed to transform Army aviation.

“A request for proposals was issued in July 2005 on the Light Utility Helicopter,” said Gass. “The first equipment is expected on the ground in fiscal year 2007.”

The LUH will conduct light general support in permissive environments and Homeland Defense, and will replace the legacy UH-1 Huey. “The Future Cargo Aircraft will replace the C-23 Sherpa,” said Gass. “It will provide tremendous capability in getting critical supplies to forward deployed forces, because it will be able to land on a very short runway – about 2,000 feet, which is a better capability than anything else we have out there.”

“Comanche money provided us the new buys [aircraft] as well as allowed us to recapitalize the current fleet,” said Gass. “The Apache, The Chinook, UH-60, all will receive upgrades.” One of the investments is in Aircraft Survivability Equipment. ASE provides counter measures to aircraft to defeat surface-to-air missiles and other threats to aircraft, said Gass.

“We are upgrading ASE and outfitting all rotary-wing aircraft with the common missile warning system – upgraded missile detection – through an accelerated process because of the need and desire to get the best equipment to the field,” said Gass.



**The Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter performs a demonstration flight at the Bell Xworks facility.**





## First Army hosts summit on multi-comp family support

Army personnel converged on Atlanta July 21 for the first Commander's Summit on the Multi-Component Family Support Network.

With Soldier's families scattered throughout the country, the MCFSN will join forces with local agencies such as libraries, schools and religious institutions to ensure those families are tracked, cared for, and provided assistance before, during and after their Soldiers' deployment.

Lt Gen. Russel L. Honoré, commanding general, First U.S. Army, invited State adjutants general, Regional Readiness commanders, garrison commanders and civilians working with active-duty, National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers from throughout First U.S. Army, as well as their counterparts from Forces Command, to the summit.

Educating the TAG, RRC and garrison commanders is crucial because they have a direct impact on family support, said Larinza Stinnett, Family Readiness Program Manager, First U.S. Army.

"The adjutants general and garrison commanders are the ones getting phone calls from worried families at 2 a.m.," Stinnett said. "Now with the MCFSN, there is a coordinated, multi-component network available 24 hours a day to assist and support family members regardless of service affiliation. And all it takes to use it is a phone call or a mouse click."

Brig. Gen. John A. Macdonald, U.S. Army Community and Family

Support Center, explained how previous family support systems were not geared to the realities of today's Army.

"In the past, the burden of fighting our nation's wars was borne primarily by the active component," Macdonald said. "The active component was located at one of the power projection platforms such as Fort Bragg or Fort Hood, and the family support systems there were installation-centric because that's where the families were located."

"Now, with the National Guard and Reserve forces' ever-increasing role in the Global War on Terrorism, our Soldiers are drawn from every corner of every state. So, instead of family members clustered around the active-duty base, we have family members located in almost every community in America."

"What the MCFSN will provide" Macdonald said, "is a multi-agency approach for community support and services to meet the diverse needs of the active and mobilized Guard and Reserve families where they live."

According to Dr. Dennis K. Orthner, program director for operations for the Citizen-Soldier Support Program, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the MCFSN will need to especially cultivate those relationships with civilian agencies that are not located near installations.

"Today's family member is, more often than not, living in a community that is several hours from the Soldier's mobilization station or training installation," Orthner said. "By enlisting those civilian agencies that already exist in the communities, we can ensure that every Soldier's family knows they are as valued as their citizen-Soldier. They will have a person

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and place to turn to and they can do that by phone or by visiting one of the many Web sites currently available."

Honoré made it clear that family assistance is a command responsibility and that the MCFSN will be supported down to the unit level.

"We need collaboration at all levels," Honoré stated. "Collaboration will develop speed and trust between those who execute MCFSN and those family members who will benefit from it. The Army is fighting as one! We need to do that for our families."

One of the many good family support stories was related by Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett, the adjutant general of Florida.

Burnett told how his family support group in Orlando approached Sea World officials about holding a special night for families of deployed Soldiers.

The folks at Sea World were very receptive to the idea and offered a significant price break, which was further defrayed when Burnett's family support group held a fund raiser.

The upshot of the story was every family member in the Orlando area was invited to Sea World to experience all the shows and attractions the weekend of July 23.

Sharing those success stories shows how the MCFSN can work wonders on the morale of the family and, ultimately, the Soldier. As was echoed many times at the summit, the less a Soldier has to worry about his family, the better that Soldier will concentrate on the fight.

In closing, Honoré said, "Knock down some of the walls so we know where soldiers and their families are and what their needs are!"

(Editor's Note: Story submitted by Phil Manson, First Army public affairs.)

## Sergeants Major Academy welcomes first Afghan

*By Wilson A. Rivera and Virginia Reza*

The opening ceremony Aug. 12 for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Class 56 included a number of firsts.

The class, with a total number of 648 students, included its first Afghan sergeant major.

Beto O'Rourke, El Paso District 8 representative, was on hand to honor the students with a proclamation by El Paso Mayor John Cook and the City Council proclaiming Aug. 12 as Sergeants Major Academy Day. The proclamation was for the many hours volunteered to the El Paso community by USASMA students over the years.

Sgt Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston first shared some brief words with Class 56 about the Army's ongoing transformation of its active and reserve components, before telling students that one of them could be the next sergeant major of the Army.

Col. David J. Abramowitz, USASMA commandant, gave his first opening ceremony speech, assuring students they would learn much from their classmates and experiences together.

"You will never forget your classmates, and after you graduate you will have created a bond that will last forever," he said.

One of the students, Command Sgt. Major Roshan Safi, was not only the first man in his province to join the Afghanistan National Army, but also the first man in his country to attend the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

During the Taliban's repression, Safi left his home for Iran where he studied English. After the Taliban's fall, he went back to Afghanistan to join the Afghanistan National Army.

"I joined because I hope for a better life for my people," said Safi. "We had a very bad time under the Taliban regime. People were selling their children for food. The families were starving, so it would be better to sell one to [allow the others to] survive. Afghanistan was not like this before," he said.

Safi said when U.S. forces first started building the Afghan army, the anti-militia forces would drop letters in villages at night to warn them against joining the Army.

"After my basic training for 70 days, I went back and I heard they killed my brother," he said. "My brother is dead, but now there are thousands of people safe."

Safi started as a supply sergeant, then moved on to take the position as battalion command sergeant major. He later was selected as the brigade command sergeant major.

After his stint at the brigade, he attended the Kabul Military Training Center and then was selected to attend the U.S. Army's Sergeants Major Course.

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Spencer from the Vermont National Guard was Safi's mentor while he was stationed in Afghanistan. He said Safi was chosen to attend the course because he could read and write in English and he has a lot of good leadership ideas.

"We thought he was the best in the enlisted part of the army to make some changes in the Afghan culture and in the Army. During our time together, we traveled to a lot of different parts of the country and we saw some of the needs and we felt he was the future for that army to support Afghan democracy," said Spencer.

(Editor's note: Wilson A. Rivera and Virginia Reza write for the Monitor newspaper at Fort Bliss.)

## Shelbystan rehearsal helps prepare 53rd BCT for deployment

Capt. Joseph H. Baugh, Jr.  
Mobilization Center Shelby Public  
Affairs Office

**Photos by: Capt. Joseph H. Baugh, Jr.**

“Loving it! Absolutely loving it.” Said Col. (Promotable) Johnson, 621st Troop Support Command (TSC) Commander, when he described his Soldiers’ reaction to the training they are receiving during this year’s annual training at Camp Shelby, Miss.

More than 900 soldiers from across the “Heart of Dixie” participated in Shelbystan, a mission rehearsal exercise (MRX) conducted to prepare the 53rd Brigade Combat Team for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. The 53rd BCT is an Army National Guard unit composed of the 53rd Separate Infantry Brigade, headquartered in Pinellas Park, Florida, and units from five other states that include: Tennessee, Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Vermont.

The 621st TSC is headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, and has command and control of all Alabama units participating in the Shelbystan exercises.

Johnson said, “Once I was given the mission, understood Lt. Gen. Honoré’s vision for the exercise, made my assessments and put into motion the necessary resources to accomplish the tasking...our leadership, both officers and enlisted, were eager to take on the mission.”

The mission incorporated Alabama Army National Guard (ALARNG) Soldiers participating as role players simulating the Afghan National Army. Known as the Shelbystan National Army (SNA)

Soldiers received instruction on various techniques, tactics, and procedures taught by 53rd BCT Embedded Trainer Teams (ETT). These ETT’s will perform similar training missions with the Afghanistan National Army.

First Sergeant Travis Denney, a trainer with the 53rd BCT ETT, says he enjoys teaching Soldiers and appreciates the realism the ALARNG



**First Lt. Francisco Negrón (right), a member of the 3/117th Field Artillery Battalion, Alabama Army National Guard, practices a personnel search on 1st Sgt. Travis Denney (left). Denney is a member of the 149th BCT headquartered in Louisville, Ky., and is attached to the 53rd Brigade Combat Team.**

brings to the exercise. “It’s great to teach Soldiers and it is very realistic when you have Soldiers to teach.”

In addition to the realism the “Cotton State” Soldiers bring to the exercise, they are afforded the opportunity to experience first hand “Theater Immersion” training. “Theater Immersion” training is a concept where Soldiers are immersed into a replicated battlefield similar to conditions in current real world operations and learn to see first, understand first, and act first to defeat the enemy.

Command Sgt. Maj. Billy Haney, the 62nd Troop Command (Higher Command of the 621st TSC) commented, “The training environment is as close to conditions presently in Iraq and Afghanistan...Soldiers move with secure convoys and are exposed to protestors, improvised explosive devices, and other

**Act *FIRST*** Return to Main

scenarios based on after action reviews from real-world theaters of operation.”

“This training is a totally new concept...it’s non-standard,” said Sgt. Maj. Steven R. Beasley, 621st TSC operations Sergeant Major. “The training is 24/7 and is a mirror image of what the 53rd BCT will be faced with in Afghanistan.”

Beasley says the training is a plus for ALARNG Soldiers in the event they receive a future deployment mission. He said the Soldiers are motivated and very receptive to the tough training.

Alabama Soldiers completed their annual training mission and fulfilled their commander’s intent to “Make it Happen!”



**Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Tuttle (on podium), an instructor with the Embedded Trainer Team 2, 53rd Brigade Combat Team, is shown teaching a class to members of the 3/117th Field Artillery Battalion, ALARNG.**





## Army's eCYBERMISSION Promotes Talented Students in Science, Math and Technology

*To all 6th through 9th-grade students who want to make a difference: Will you accept the eCYBERMISSION challenge?*

The U.S. Army's eCYBERMISSION, a web-based science, math and technology competition, allows students to compete for regional and national awards, while working to solve problems in their community.

Teams of three or four students conduct research and experiments to test their hypotheses, reach out to community leaders and communicate with on-line CyberGuides (virtual mentors), Army personnel who are experts in science, math and technology. Teams must identify how their solution affects the community and what their plans are for implementation and next steps.

Sixteen teams will be chosen as regional winners and will win \$3,000 for each student as well as an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the National Judging and Educational event. Four national first-place winners will be chosen from these sixteen teams, and will win an additional \$5,000 each.

Registration for eCYBERMISSION's competition opens Sept. 1, 2005 and runs through Dec. 12, 2005. The eCYBERMISSION competition is open to all students in grades 6 through 9 across the United States and to students enrolled in Department of Defense Education Activity schools throughout the world.

For additional information about this competition visit [www.ecybermission.com](http://www.ecybermission.com).

Please contact either the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command's Public Affairs Office at 410-436-4345 or [public.affairs@apea.army.mil](mailto:public.affairs@apea.army.mil) or eCYBERMISSION Mission Control at 1-866-GO-CYBER or [missioncontrol@ecybermission.com](mailto:missioncontrol@ecybermission.com). Major Desiree Wineland, U.S. Army Public Affairs at (703) 697-7592, [Desiree.Wineland@hqda.army.mil](mailto:Desiree.Wineland@hqda.army.mil)

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Send us your stories or story ideas.

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Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré—Commanding General

Lt. Col Richard Steele—Chief, Public Affairs  
[Richard.Steele@first.army.mil](mailto:Richard.Steele@first.army.mil)  
Ms. Gayle Johnson—PA Specialist—Editor  
[Gayle.Johnson@first.army.mil](mailto:Gayle.Johnson@first.army.mil)

First U.S. Army Public Affairs Office  
4705 N Wheeler Drive  
Forest Park, GA 30297-5000

DSN 797-7327 CML (404) 469-7327  
FAX DSN 797-3101  
CML FAX (404) 469-3101